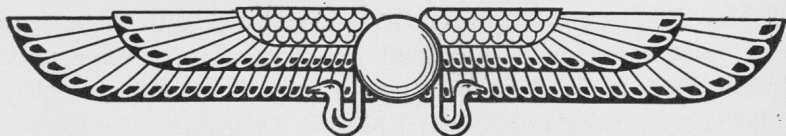


*"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."*



# MERCURY.

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## EDITORIAL + STAFF:

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +  
+ EDITH SEARS, +  
+ MARIE A. WALSH.

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## PLATONISM

In the Light of Theosophy.

**I**N different departments of life, some great soul stands forth in a century, or as the crowning point of many centuries, expressive of a culmination of human advancement, a grand type of the universal attainment of the race. Centered in this one individual's life are the converging paths of thought, bringing together the results of a broad extent of time, as rivers form a confluence in some great body of water which, taking them all as tributary, flows out to the ocean through its own outlet.

Plato stands at this focusing point of Greek learning. He expresses the embodiment of Athenian scholarship, of that scholarship as it flowers in the system of Socrates; and then for its own blossoming it gathers rare qualities from the garden of the Pharaohs, from the mystical Egyptian atmosphere, and thus enriched becomes the seed of Greek philosophy.

It is questionable whether the term "Platonism" refers directly to the teaching of Plato or to a derived something which has received the name Platonism. Henry Lewes says that no one has yet been able to settle definitely what was Plato's philosophy. A study of the subject leads me to think that Theosophy has an interpretation of Plato's philosophy which throws light upon it.

Some hundred and thirty years before Christ, about the middle

of May, Plato was born, at Athens. The usual myth that attends the life of great souls—i. e., that his conception was miraculous and his mother a virgin—points to an experience which occultists call the *mystic death* or spiritual birth. This of itself places his teachings beyond the ordinary intellectual interpretation, and we have great reason to believe that Plato was an adept of a certain order or degree. He received a most thorough education and this at a time when the halo which surrounds Greek learning was in its full lustre ; Gymnastics, rhetoric, poetry, music were mastered, not merely learned ; and from them he attained grace and strength of body, clearness and beauty of style in expression, nice perception in poetry and music, and winning a reputation in all of these lines. Fragments of his poetry have been preserved, and this epigram makes us wish for more :

“Thou gazest on the stars, my life;  
Ah, gladly would I be  
Yon starry skies with *thousand* eyes  
That I might gaze on thee.”

One feels that this expresses a soul unfettered in its search, but still longing for the unattained. It does not speak of a peaceful heart, though it reveals a deep one.

Thus equipped from the schools, at the age of twenty years, Plato met Socrates and remained with him until his death, ten years later. After the death of Socrates, Plato visited other teachers and thoroughly studied mathematics. “While studious youth were crowding to Athens from every quarter in search of Plato for their master, the philosopher was wandering along the winding banks of the Nile, himself a disciple to the wise men of Egypt.”

On his return to Athens, emulating the example of his master Socrates, he began to teach. His Academy was in a garden of great beauty, where everything in nature conspired to the contemplation of aspiring ideals, the glory of which reaches us through twenty-three centuries. He lived and taught and wrote here almost uninterruptedly till his death at eighty-five years of age. The interruptions were two visits that he made to the Island of Sicily, with the idea of founding a colony or community there which should exemplify Platonism, or Idealism. But in this he did not

succeed. He taught that the soul of man is divine and ever longing to be released from its earthly prison, striving to catch by anticipation some faint glimpses of the region of Eternal Truth where it would some day rest. The phenomena of this world he knew to be fleeting, but he was too wise to overlook them. Ephemeral and imperfect as they are, they guided him to that eternal truth for which he longed. He knew that everything men call existence is a perpetual flux, something which always becoming never is, and that the reports our senses make of these things are of the same fleeting character. Time is a wavering image of eternity. Its transitory phenomena are images or symbols of true existence. Interrogate, classify, analyze them, discover the qualities they have in common; discover that which is invariable; discover the One in the many, and you have discovered the secret of existence. Only when the soul is free from the body shall we be able to discern things in all of the ineffable splendor of Truth.

The great business of the philosopher, therefore, is to emancipate himself, not only from the dominion of the animal appetite, but also from the illusions of sense, and to retire into the interior world of reflection in which the mind can commune with its kindred eternal essences.

Supreme among these essences are the forms of the beautiful, the true, the good, in which triad the good takes the highest place and becomes, perhaps, identical with Deity. The Good is the All. Its emanations are the beautiful and the true. There is a common fund of Truth from which all souls draw ideas. In existence, the soul antedates the body. The world-soul pervades all phenomenal existence, and carries the world to the Supreme Essence. Because the soul is eternal it remembers or recollects its anterior states; it interprets what sensation presents from the basis of its universal sum of Truth.

"Our immortal souls have sojourned in the celestial region, where the voice of Truth rings clearly, and where the aspect of Truth is unveiled. They are now sojourning in this fleeting, flowing river of life, stung with resistless longing for the skies. Ideas are the only realities, and they are real only as they are one with the good, the beautiful and the true." The proper food of the soul is derived from the supercelestial plane of Truth, and in par-

ticular the wings by which the soul is made light and carried aloft are nourished upon it. It is an inviolable law that any soul, which placing itself in the train of the Gods obtains a sight of any of these self-existent realities, remains exempt from harm until the next circumlocution, and if it can contrive to do this every time it is forever safe and uninjured.

But if being unable to elevate itself to the necessary height, it altogether fails of seeing these realities, and being weighed down by vice and oblivion, it loses its wings, it falls to the earth and enters into and animates some body. It never enters at the first generation into the body of a brute animal, but that which has seen most; enters into the body of a person who will become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or a person addicted to music or to love. The next in rank, into that of a monarch or a warrior; the third, into a person qualified to administer the state or carry on gainful operations. Fourth, into a person fond of hard labor or skilled in curing disease, etc. In all of these different fortunes they who conduct themselves justly will obtain next time a more eligible lot. The soul which has never seen the truth at all cannot enter into human form. The mode of apprehending is recollecting those things which the soul formerly saw as it journeyed along with the Gods. The soul which constantly employs itself in trying to recollect those things which the Gods contemplate, and by contemplation of which they are Gods, is soonest refledged, and being lifted out of and beyond human cares and interests, he is by the vulgar considered as mad, while in reality he is inspired. Plato looked upon human passion as disease, and human pleasure as frivolity. He looked to human reason to destroy the one and forego the other.

Aspiring and true as this teaching is, one feels a chilliness, a lack of the Divine touch in its methods. Plato was true and great for his time, but the Gospel which came four hundred years after his time was the revelation of a plant of which Platonism was but the seed. The Gospel of Love is a greater gospel than the gospel of humanity—paradoxical as this may seem. Are they not united in Theosophy?

Plato sees that the soul and mind must be tranquil to grow its wings, and to obtain that tranquillity, he would banish all conflict-



ing elements. (This is the theory of much of modern socialism). Poetry and music interfere with it, so he would banish the poets and musicians. Conjugal love interferes with it, so Plato ordains community of wives and interdicts parentage. The Voice of the Silence says: "If thou art told that to become Arhan thou hast to cease to love all beings, tell them they lie. If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son, to disown thy father and call him householder—for man and beast all pity to renounce—tell them their tongue is false."

We cannot deify the intellect, make it our high court of appeal, and look to it to lead us out of the darkened ways of mortal life. It is but the blind leading the blind. The teaching of Plato seems to me to leave no room for the activity of the soul in that which is above the soul. It is true that Platonism contemplates the *reach within* as the way to the true, but its method is that of human reasoning, which is the look without. This desire that would overcome desire is in the one body of desire. It is a house divided against itself. It has no power to arise and put its heel on the dragon's neck. Repression is not destructive to the thing repressed. The self-controlled man stands on a middle ground between two forces, and he can stand there only as he denies the lower by the recognition of the higher. Any war of the self upon the self is self-destructive, and not self-creative. "He that loseth his life for *my sake* shall find it." We emphasize "my sake." It is the impersonal reach that is the Real speaking in us. Faith is a power which Platonism does not contemplate, yet it is the corner-stone of the soul's structure. The whole teaching of the Bhagavad Gita is the foregoing of human impulses for Divine realities. It is not to forego—to deny—to get away from impulses, but it is in recognizing them as false kindred, it is to enter the battle where Krishna leads. We do not understand that the plane of the intellect is to become the Higher Manas, but that it is to yield itself to the Higher Manas. "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." The warrior within does battle. We can look on and choose. "He my servant who worships me with exclusive devotion, having completely overcome the qualities, is fitted to be absorbed in Brahma, the Supreme. He whose nature is free from Egotism does not slay though he

killeth all of these people." Platonism says that to love husband, wife, children, friends, music, poetry, is feeding sentiment, emotion and desire; so this lover proceeds to destroy his love! This is Arjuna as Arjuna moving to external battle. It is not the consciousness that, recognizing the "warrior within," lets him fight for us. "The senses and organs move to their appropriate objects." Nature's method and the soul's method are one method.

When Buddha has passed the great trial of self-renunciation, lo! his wife and child are with him. He comes from the inner conflict with them a thousand times endeared. The Christ-man in the throes of crucifixion speaks for the care of his Mother. Every human obligation must be fully met by the soul that rises from the sepulchre of the human into the illumination of the Divine.

Plato seeks a community that shall isolate itself from any expression of the human, any experience in the "frivolity and folly of life." He commands the human heart to obey the human intellect, thus binding the soul twice over.

Theosophy reveals to us that it is through the principle of Desire in its highest aspect of love that we may rid ourselves of the lower Desires, and it further recommends the right uses of all conditions as a means to that end. In this it is not Platonism.

"God sends us love—something to love he lends us,  
And when love has grown to ripeness  
That on which it feeds falls away,  
And love is left alone."

LYDIA BELL.

## NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

(Continued from page 8.)

There is very much to be said for this view, not as a piece of mere worldly policy, but as a method of sage procedure based on facts in human nature. Revolutionary reforms do not usually endure. To be permanent, a change must not be too sharply radical. To preserve what is good while rejecting what is evil has the merit of sound sense, of conformity to conscience, of agreeability to taste. It provides no material for future regret, and it saves a correction of mistakes which would certainly check progress and might spoil consistency. Moreover, the fact needs re-

membrance that human beings are often more profoundly influenced by sentiment than by reason, feeling being more acute than logic. What is connected in the soul with sacred memories, venerated associations, tender experiences, with hours of deep emotion or epochs of spiritual vigor, has a force which no time will annul and no argument dislodge. If this is disregarded under pressure from a reforming spirit, it may temporarily lie dormant, but in later days of doubt or discouragement or adversity it is sure to recover life and revive a longing for the old system with its ministration to sentiment. Hence to reject all the content of discarded faiths is virtually to retain a yearning that may ultimately revolutionize the whole result and cause re-acceptance of what had been supposed forever past.

These considerations have pressed upon reformers in every age, and the later history of their reforms has been powerfully affected by the degree in which conservatism or liberalism shaped their work. Moreover, one exceedingly important element has been the measure of foresight which provided for changes and modifications as experience should show their need. If it was assumed that a cast-iron system was to be adopted for all time, that was evidence of too much assurance of present wisdom and of too little perception that excellence evolves gradually, repeated alterations in structure being necessitated as years disclose weakness or inadequacy. In religious affairs this provision for future change is far less readily conceded than in political, not merely because feelings and convictions are usually stronger, but because it would admit both an uncertain knowledge of Divine things and the fact that religion is subjected to the same evolutionary law as are other human possessions—neither of which have theologians been disposed to grant. Whenever this has been refused, whenever the outcome of reform has been a scheme as fixed as its predecessor, however opposite its character, the new wine was virtually put in the old bottles, and in time the bottles burst under the inevitable fermentation.

This whole subject has no little interest for us as Theosophists.

I do not say "as members of the Theosophical Society," because the Society has no creed, no doctrinal exactions, no policy towards religious convictions except that of unlimited toleration.

Into the Society are equally welcomed men of all faiths or of none, their personal views being absolutely their own property, the Society having neither the right nor the desire to inquire into them, the common bond of union being only the recognition of Universal Human Brotherhood and the desire to seek and know Truth. The question of what opinions are right and what wrong, and the further question as to how the right shall be fostered, do not and cannot arise in the Society, since it takes no stand as to distinctions of opinion, and of course no policy as to favoring them. But individuals as Theosophists, whether members of the Society or not, do hold Theosophical doctrines, for there is such a thing as Theosophy, there are doctrines embedded in it, and men are Theosophists because they believe those doctrines. It is doubtless the fact that these are not sharply defined, as they are in Church creeds, and it is equally the fact that diverse conceptions and interpretations and applications abound through the Theosophic ranks, and still further—and most happily—is it the fact that there is no authoritative tribunal to which appeal may be made for decision of doctrine, Theosophists being as free as are members of the Theosophical Society. “Orthodoxy” and “heterodoxy” are words absent from our vocabulary, since there is no one to say what is orthodox and what heterodox, no one to constrain, no one to discipline. And yet it is true that there are certain great facts recognized as vital to the Theosophical system, fundamental in it, inherent throughout it, without which the system would be meaningless and worthless. The Law of Evolution and the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation are examples. Indeed, it may be said that as acquaintance with Theosophy extends, as more is perceived of its scope and fulness and bearings, as larger knowledge discloses its sources and proofs and affirmations, students draw closer together in their apprehensions. For it must be remembered that Theosophy is not an affair of speculation, an ingenious scheme worked out by vivacious minds from their own resources, but an immemorial science, conserved and demonstrated and verified by countless generations of sages developed in powers far beyond those we experience. Hence it has the quality of *fact*, certitude becoming more apparent as each step makes it better understood. Very naturally, therefore, they whose ex-

panding knowledge reveals to them increasing evidence in every quarter and on every line become not only more certain of its reality, but more agreed in its details. We can properly surmise that among Masters there is no difference of opinion as to explored realms, and that the unexplored are constantly diminishing in extent. But at our initial stage, with our few facts, small access to Teachers, limited grasp of principles, there must be variant opinions all along, and we have no authorized exponent whose word is and must be final.

Even so, there are still some elementary truths which, as I have said, are essential to any conception of Theosophy, and as to which all Theosophists are substantially in accord. In addition to the three which I instanced, one might very well cite the immanence of the Divine in Nature, the composite structure of Man, the fact of cycles, the existence of psychic powers, the perception of spiritual truth through spiritual consciousness, the true nature of death and the states after it, the realness of Masters and their work among men, and not a few other doctrines which are inherent in the Theosophic system or are its necessary concomitants. Of course adherence to these does differentiate a man from the conventional hosts around. The name "Theosophist" does not connote an individual who upholds a clear-cut and peremptory body of doctrine, but it certainly intimates that he has some beliefs quite recognizable in character, and that they are quite distinct from those which are general in the community. This name gives him conspicuity, even if it does not confer upon him honor.

Theosophy, furthermore, being no superficial outlook upon the world of men and things, or even an ingenious speculation without other basis than an active imagination and a plausible logic, but a veritable philosophy resting on solid data secured during ages of the profoundest investigation, does not pretend to treat the problems of life in any fanciful, uncertain tone. It is not dogmatic, but it points with an assurance derived from knowledge to the scheme of human evolution, the conditions to its successful progress, the laws under which it must advance. As these are both demonstrable and demonstrated, it wastes no time upon suppositions or theories, but goes straight to fact and proffers



truth. Perceiving, for instance, the widespread selfishness and injustice in the world, and the obvious failure of existing systems to check them, it does not content itself with moral homilies or religious precepts, but proclaims distinctly that these things will not cease till men realize that every wrong they commit will revert upon themselves, and that this will occur in another life on earth if it does not in this. In other words, it asserts that every motive will in fact prove futile which is not rooted in Karma and Reincarnation. This is a very precise, a very emphatic, statement. It dismisses the ordinary moral stimuli as altogether inadequate, boldly taking the ground that the very selfishness which prompts aggression must be turned upon itself as the instrument of its own suppression. You may not make a man understand that injustice to another is an offense against brotherliness and therefore an evil which he should correct ; but if you can make him understand that every wrong practiced upon a brother-man is absolutely, certainly to return upon himself, not by an arbitrary dictate of the Creator but by a law unalterably ingrained in the constitution of things from the beginning, he will begin to ask himself whether such wrongs pay, whether anything is gained by acts which bring back as much trouble as they inflict. So reflecting, he is disposed to save himself by the only practicable mode—self-restraint. You may say that this is not an elevated motive. True, but you are not dealing with an elevated soul who would comprehend such motive. You have to present the considerations which appeal to a man on his own plane, not those on a plane beyond him; and if the dominant motive is self-emolument, that must be used as the strongest until slow evolution brings him within the range of loftier influences. It will be time to descant upon the beauty of altruism when he has realized its necessity, and to justify the law after he has digested its inflexibility.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, F. T. S.

[To be Continued.]

It is persistence of force, action, reaction and periodicity, all in one, and that one the dynamical effect of causes produced and forces awakened into activity by our own actions. If one breaks the laws of harmony—the laws of life—one must be prepared to fall into the chaos one has oneself produced. The Laws of Life are their own avengers.

—*Secret Doctrine.*

## THE DREAM OF HOR-MA-AKKU.

COSMIC Evolution rises and falls in rhythmic breathings, sometimes likened to the expiration and inspiration of the great Father-Mother, at others to the convolution of the twin serpent of the Creative thought, which turning on itself and biting its tail indicates the continual destruction and reconstruction of the Cosmos.

The ancient Hindu philosophy calls it sleep of Brahm, in whose out-breathings all things have their origin, and on whose in-breathings all find their Pralaya of rest. The natives of the South Sea Islands account for the earthquakes of that locality by saying that a giant sleeps in the earth, and as he turns over from time to time, makes the earth heave, his breath charged with hot water and fire comes out of the apertures.

The belt and dagger in the constellation of Orion, which to them is reversed, is an enormous fan which the giant used to sweep the evil from the earth, but the evil being too great, broke one side out of the fan, and so he hung it up in the sky till the last day of the world, when he will arise and complete the work. The absence of stars from one side of the fan is a sufficient proof to them of the truth of this story.

Undoubtedly this giant is identical with Brahm, with Orion bound in the heavens with Prometheus, the generative Breath of Life, bound in his adamant chains within the matrix of matter until Hermes, the Great Cosmic Purpose of Evolution, shall set him free, and with him all Egos who have developed spiritual life, leaving all others to sleep the long sleep until the Pralaya is passed and another morning breaks.

The legend of Merlin, the British magician—the king attempting to build a city which was thrown down every night by an earthquake, till Merlin took the king to the top of a mountain and showed him a cavern beneath the city where lay two serpents asleep; but at sun-down these serpents awoke and began to fight each other, causing an earthquake which shook down the walls of the city, whereupon Merlin threw his magic wand between the serpents; they fell asleep forever, and the city was built—this is strikingly similar to the story of Mercury and Apollo. The wand is that mysterious power known to all magicians—the har-

monious concentration of will, the calm silence of conscious power, without which all efforts in building the city of Wisdom are vain. All these myths, whether of serpents or the bound giant and his deliverer, show an indivisible unity from which emanates a duality of positive and negative forces bound and focused on the center round which they forever gyrate. The negative is circumstance, bound in the chains of Karma; the positive is the creative purpose evolving cosmic evolution on Creation.

This duality is strikingly illustrated by the Sphynx, Hor-ma-akku, or Horus on the Horizon, a vibrating harmony between the two worlds of Spirit and Astral Substance which calls from the unseen worlds of cause those subtle ideographs of form which mould to their own natures the phenomena of life we see around us. It is the elucidation of these truths which is destined to give a death-blow to that gross materialism of the present age, which gives to the Formulator of the universe the character of an irascible despot, and to nature the attributes of a series of chances in that absurd and despicable formula "the survival of the fittest." There is no effect without a predetermined cause, and while steering clear of the whirlpool of fatalism, we should also avoid the rock on which so many lives have split, the error of leaving events to chance.

Astral principles, though impersonal, are not without purpose, and to weld their divine perfections into the nature of man is the realization of the perfect harmony from which they spring. They are the thoughts of the cosmos reflected into the Being of man, and whether the process of welding be painful or pleasant it must be lived through, and this blending process is the dream of Hor-na-akku, in which the cosmic forces wheel in harmony, synchronizing their movements with those of the planets and giving us a basis for the science of Astrology. Well is it compared to a dream, this gyrating of cause and effect, giving birth in its subtle and unforeseen sequences to events so strange and weird in human life.

Brahm sleeps—as the Ineffable One breathes in rhythmic motion there floats outward an aura of pale azure; it is the breath of Creative Thought; it streams away in thin spiral lines, convoluting here and there into centers of cosmic energy, some time to de-

velop into worlds; he rests on his left side, which is feminine; the right is masculine; he is the Macro-pro-sopus of the Kabala, and His nine-fold beard is blue; only the right side of his face is seen, the left is in a black shadow; it is the duality of Ormazd and Arhiman of the Persians, it is Bluebeard and his wife. The beautiful old face changes into that of a lovely woman; still she sleeps. It is the Sleeping Beauty waiting for the Fairy Prince to awaken her with a kiss. All is silent in the pale, cold starlight; still she sleeps, but from the east there shines a rosy light; a ray of sunlight falls on the maiden's lips; she wakes, the Day of Brahm has begun, and again the Universe throbs with living Fire.

RAMAH KEZU.

[To be Continued.]

## BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

### A Vision.

*My Dear Editor:*

One day last year my mother went out calling, and I, when I thought she was coming home, went to the gate and looked for her. Finally I saw her coming. "Oh," I said to myself, "mamma is coming now." I stooped down to get something, I do not remember what it was, but when I looked up again mamma had disappeared. I looked and wondered what had become of her. "Well," I thought, "she might have forgotten something, and has gone back for it. But then I do not see how she could have gone so quickly." There I had seen her coming down the sidewalk just as plainly as could be. While I was pondering over it, a few minutes afterward, a lady came to see mamma. I told her I had seen mother coming home, but she had disappeared. Soon after mamma returned, and I told her about the occurrence. She said she must have thrown out such strong thoughts that her Astral body came instead of herself. There was one thing, though, I did not see her have, and that was a bouquet of flowers.

Another occurrence of this kind was when I went out on a class

picnic. I was going to do something, when a voice spoke out and said, "Don't do it, your mother is here." My mother was not there, but only my teacher. When I was returning home from the joyful time I had, mamma was out in the garden talking to a lady and her children, and she said, "Here comes Lulu." She stooped down to put the lady's baby into the carriage, but when she looked up again I had disappeared. To see what had become of me, she walked up a couple of blocks with her friend, and at the same time saying, "I wonder if Lulu went around the corner, but what business has she around that way?" Soon after the lady said, "Here comes Lulu on the next street." Mamma asked me what I was doing on that street. She said she had seen me come skipping along, but I had disappeared. The town-clock was about to strike six o'clock when this happened and we were both thinking of each other at the same time. I remarked to my girl-friend, who was walking with me, "I wonder what mamma will think of me coming home so late?" The queerest part of these occurrences are, mamma saw my Astral where I saw hers, and we both had something in our hands, though neither of us saw it. We saw the Astrals about 300 feet from where we stood. Can you explain these Astral Voyages? I am one of your young people, for I was born 1883, after the new era of the sixth sense, commenced—so mamma tells me.

L. T.

*To L. T.*

The young lady and her mother are evidently psychics; for they perceive thought-forms. The vision seems to have been a psychometric perception of thought-form made possible by the magnetic harmony uniting the thoughts of mother and child. No astral form was seen; the experience was simply a psychic impression on the retina and nerves.

E.

We are certainly nearing the time when the senses of sight and hearing will perceive thought-forms and voices. Such quickened perception will be the normal condition of the more advanced among us. Thought is force, somewhat akin to electric force, and thoughts are forms of this force, dim or well defined, according to the clearness of the mental picture and its intensity.

To the saying of Buddha, "we are what we think," we may add



also, "we are where we think," for it must be borne in mind that the body is not the I, merely the vehicle of the I. The application of this law to daily life will explain many phenomena and do away with much superstition in regard to psychic experiences.

Our young correspondent and her mother saw each other's projected thought in the same place. It is possible that the environment in that spot assisted in making the thought-form tangible, just as certain lights aid in photography. The bouquet and package were not seen because they were not in the thought. The term Thought-image is preferable to astral form, because in Theosophic teaching astral form means a very different thing. M.

## PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

◆

THIS DEPARTMENT IS INTENDED TO BE ONE OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE. ANY ITEMS SHOWING THE AID THEOSOPHY GIVES IN DAILY LIFE WILL BE WELCOME.

NOTE.—The following letter shows what good may be done by individual Theosophists in the work of "lifting ever so little the heavy Karma of the world." The purpose of Theosophy is not to form a sect but to help struggling humanity to reach the Place of Peace.

*To the Editor of Mercury:*

Some kind California friend has my heartfelt thanks for sending me the back numbers of MERCURY. I am not a Theosophist, but I wish to know about Theosophy, as I think there must be something in its teachings that inspires one to do his best.

The Universal Brotherhood ideas are beautiful, and from personal knowledge, I know there are noble souls in your midst—souls filled with "Universal Love and entire unselfishness." I cannot begin to tell the good that has been done by helpful thoughts, spiritual uplifts, etc., that have come to me in letters from such a soul, an earnest Theosophist. These lovely words have cheered an invalid mother, have upheld a struggling daughter; they have been copied and placed in conspicuous places in a schoolroom, where discouraged trainers and wearied teachers got in the habit of stopping a moment to see if there was a thought for them.

One young mother says, as she glances at her cherub-faced five months old boy, "Ah, my boy, you little think what you owe to that far-off Theosophist who sends us such helpful words. This young mother is confident that the love-illuminated thoughts com-

ing in the letters of my Theosophic friend have been everything to her when "troubled on every side."

I enclose amount of subscription and wish you to begin my year with August, 1895. I like the Journal very much, and see an improvement from the first to the last. The catechism, the questions and answers are simple and instructive to older people. The editorials are teeming with helpful thoughts, and the stories can be useful in language and story lessons, in the morning exercises in my school-room. I should like to see the stories collected into book form for the use of Primary and Kindergarten teachers.

With best wishes for your journal and all literature which helps soul-growth,

I am sincerely,

C. T. L., Iowa.

*Dear Mr. Mercury:*

I DO want to tell you how glad your visits make us. Sister Nan and I read all your stories and Mother explains those we do not understand. Some of your names are awful—there is no mistake. Nan wants to know if you have real lotuses at the circles. I wish we could go to some of them, but we live way off in the country; we can only read about you. But we, that's Nan and I, want to tell you about our dear Punch. Punch is a dog; a real beauty too, though he is a bull-dog. Punch always listens when we read your stories. Nan says he understands, but I don't believe that. Girls have such odd fancies, don't they?

Punch looks after the horses and all the farm-yard. He is the busiest dog; he never sleeps, the whole of him at a time. He always has one ear or one eye awake. He knows the moment anything goes wrong—so he must think. We are sure he thinks. Mother says she wishes we were as faithful at our work and as ready to give up our own way as Punch is. Now, he is always ready to amuse us or to walk with us, no matter how busy he has been, or how nice a nap he is taking. And he is a first-class dog to run errands. Mother will say: "Punch, fetch Master," and away he will run and find Father, no matter where he is. He barks three times to tell any of us that we are wanted home. He never makes a mistake in the number—never! so he knows how to count. He will catch a chicken and never hurt it, or drive the

cows home; few boys could beat him doing that. Now, is not that a sign he thinks? Then he loves a joke. He will hide Nan's thimble, or mother's keys, and watch us slyly as we look for them; and when we say, "Punch, you naughty dog, where have you hid those things?" he will grin. Yes, Mr. MERCURY, he grins—his mouth puckers all up. It does now; no joking either.

When baby sister died, Punch didn't eat nor bark for a week, and his eyes looked for all the world as if he had been crying. I could tell you so much about our dog, only it's hard work to write such a long story; but I must tell you about Punch's conscience. He used to like a good fight, of course. He wouldn't be a bull dog if he didn't. Well, mother told Nan and me that if we wanted to cure Punch of fighting we should never get angry or quarrel before him. Mother is a Theosophist as you are, and she says we make the animals act mean and ugly; and that we shall have to pay up for it some day. Is that really true?

We believe what mother says, anyway; so we tried awful hard not to give Punch bad example. Oh, but it was hard though! specially when Cousin Tom came round; I just had to keep my hands behind my back not to fight him. Mr. MERCURY, were you ever a small boy? Mother told us a story about your killing a man with a hundred eyes. My! but that's a story. Did you fight him real, or did you shoot him unbeknown? I never could quite make out. Well, I expect you know all about how I felt, but Punch was close by, and I didn't fight. Punch grew very peaceable, he is even sociable with Arabella, the cat; but one day two big cross dogs came to our place. I expect the boys and girls in their homes quarrel; anyway these dogs riled; Punch and they had an awful fight; Punch beat them both, that he did. After that fight Punch acted the most shamed dog you ever saw. He couldn't look us in the face. He slunk out of sight whenever he could. When mother looked at him, he hung his head and looked as if he wanted to sink into the ground. Then he tried to do all sorts of things for everybody and everything. He was meek with the chickens, humble-like with the horses, and he allowed Arabella, the cat, to torment him without snapping. Now don't you think Punch was trying to make amends for his naughtiness—I do; so does Nan.

But what I want to know, Mr. MERCURY, is this: Will Punch be a man when he reincarnates? And Nan wants to know whether he won't go to Dev Can? And if anybody ever says dogs don't think, you tell them of our Punch; won't you please?

Respectfully yours,

DICK LISCOMB, California.

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## AROUND THE ZODIAC.

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### Libra—the Balance.

SEPT. 21ST TO OCT. 21ST.

**D**URING this time the sun sheds its rays upon the earth from that Zodiacal Center of Force known as the Balance. When Scorpio went forth from Virgo and the one became two, the sign Libra or the Balance was placed in the Zodiac, as a sign of union and of separation. It forms the pivot of Ezekiel's wheel—above, spirit; below, matter.

It is the point of contact between the Positive and the Negative forces, their perfect equilibration, which is creation. It represents discrimination, judgment, justice, hence it is Karma. In the body it rules the lumbar region and renal cavity.

Pansies, violets, strawberry vines, primrose, white rose are its flowers. The planet Venus is its ruler. Its gem is the diamond, the perfect crystallization of carbon. Carbon is the basis of animal life.

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## T. S. ECHOES.

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The Australasian Section organized in 1894, by Mrs. Annie Besant, held its First Annual Convention last April.

Excellent reports come from the different Branches. Mr. J. C. Staples, late of the headquarters, London, was elected General Secretary.

The different centers of the American Section East and West are doing active work in a quiet way. We hope next month to receive items from them.

Advices from London bring the good news that Miss Cooper (of London Hqrs. Staff) will hereafter send MERCURY a monthly letter; also that several prominent writers will contribute articles for its pages.

The Branches are busy at work. Countess Wachtmeister arrived in Melbourne about May 24th. She intends visiting all the Theosophic centers. Her presence will give still more impulse to all lines of work.

NEW MEXICO.—Mr. N. F. de Clifford of Las Vegas reports excellent work from the "Annie Besant" Branch which is just organized. Its members have held two or three meetings weekly in order to make rapid progress in Theosophical Teachings. Interest in Theosophical subjects is fast awakening in New Mexico.

Mr. N. F. de Clifford will soon visit Los Angeles, Cal. Wherever he goes he will devote his energies to Theosophic work. We congratulate our co-workers in the South on the acquisition of this earnest worker.

Countess Wachtmeister has made arrangements to visit the American section in December. She expects to stay some time with us, holding meetings, lecturing, etc. Not only does she intend visiting the branches, but also isolated F. T. S. who think that good may be done in their town by a visit from this devoted and experienced worker. It will be well to look around and see what each one can do to make this visit result in the greatest good possible. Communications in relation to the visit of the Countess must be made to Mr. Fullerton, 42 Irving Place, New York City.

Chicago Branch, Chicago, Ill., numbers fifty members. There were about thirty resignations at the time the Branch repudiated the action of the Boston Convention, and four new members have been added since that time. Regular meetings have been held each Wednesday evening, a paper, followed by discussion, being the order of the meeting. On each Sunday evening a free lecture is given at the headquarters. The attendance has been very satisfactory.

N. E. WEEKS, Sec.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

### The Astral Plane.

In the "Transactions of the London Lodge" No. 24, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater explores the fascinating region known as "The Astral Plane." This charm is increased by the strong and vivid English and the easy literary style in which the matter is handled.

This little volume, which might be dubbed a "Handbook of the Other World," is a splendid example of the evolution of Theosophical Literature, and the advantage of studying Eastern theories by the mental methods of the West. Just as a naturalist would set to work to teach the public all



about mollusks or bacilli, so our author, by scientific methods of classification, investigates every portion of these invisible realms, tabulating the broad characteristics of each with accurate definitions. Any man who has ever speculated on the possibilities of a finer field of existence than the gross earth life will be interested and instructed by this study, while it will brush many mystic cobwebs from the minds of ordinary Theosophists and reveal profound hints of occult Truth to advanced students.

First premising the "reality," in the everyday sense of the word of this plane, he separates it into seven sub-divisions, sketching in suggestions of "the scenery" for each. The "inhabitants" of this strange country are grouped under nineteen headings, ranging from the Adepts and Black Magicians down to the "Elemental Essence" and "Nature Spirits."

The clear descriptions of the various states of human astrals, both of such as do and do not possess a physical body, are of intense interest.

The author gently and wisely demonstrates the harm that may result to loved ones who have fallen asleep from the intense longing of selfish grief. Thus Reason aids in the spiritualization of that Love which verily reaches beyond the grave.

Much light is thrown on the mystery of the dual nature of Manas in remarks about "the Shade," page 30.

A striking fact is the large number of denizens of the Astral Plane who exist by absorbing the vital forces of living people. The information presented should keep sensible people away from "seances" and "circles" where the injurious astral atmosphere can be justly compared to the danger to the physical in the stench of decaying animal or vegetable matter. Possibly some of the nervous exhaustion of highly-strung sensitive people, such as society women who live on refined sensual excitement, or any one unprotected by habits of mental activity or an exalted life-purpose, may result from the attacks of invisible, greedy entities.

The most valuable section is on "artificial entities," carrying out in detail the laws of thought-forms, found also in Mrs. Besant's teachings. Besides the philosophic interest, the idea of moral responsibility for one's thoughts is powerfully suggested by the exact knowledge of the life and actions of these children of our brains. It is a much stronger stimulus to kind and holy thinking than the usual dim idea of the power of mind to behold, by Reason's magic, our thoughts shielding a friend or inspiring a weaker brother, and to recognize our own mean or angry offspring returning to tempt us to renewed wrong.

Lest the vivid imagery employed may impress us as too concrete, we are bidden "to grasp the idea that astral vision, or rather astral perception, may, from one point of view, be defined as the capability of receiving an enormously increased number of different sets of vibrations." P. 81, The Astral Plane.

E. S.

### Magazines.

The ASTRAL THEOSOPHIST gives place to THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA. This organ of our Australian brothers is earnest, broad-minded, in a word, truly Theosophic. The July number has a masterly synthesis of Theosophic teachings from the pen of Annie Besant. One excellent feature is the question column, the answers of which are clear and excel in the intuitive quality.

THEOSOPHIC GLEANER, Bombay, for July, 1895, teems with interesting articles. "How to Begin the Study of Theosophy" and "A Course of Theosophic Reading" would make a good pamphlet.

The ARYA BALA BODHINE, or HINDU BOYS' JOURNAL, sustains its reputation. "Our Religion" is deep reading for boys of sixty as well as boys of sixteen.

—EDITOR.

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

### THE TWELVE BROTHERS.

Once upon a time there was a king who had twelve sons, the youngest of whom was named Benjamin. This king told his queen that if their next child should be a girl he would kill all his sons in order that the daughter should inherit all his wealth. He had made twelve coffins to hold the bodies of the princes, and placed them in a room in his palace; then he locked the door and gave the key to his queen, telling her to keep his intention secret. But one day, Benjamin saw his mother weeping and asked her the reason, so she showed him the coffins, and told him what the king had said. Then she told Benjamin to go with his brothers into the forest and watch from a tall tree, saying that if a girl should be born a red flag would be hoisted above the castle.

So the princes departed, and on the twelfth day as Benjamin was watching from the tree he saw a red flag over the castle; then he with his brothers went into the depths of the forest, where they found a cottage, and lived in it for ten long years.

Now the king's daughter had become a most lovely girl, with beautiful golden wavy hair. A five-pointed star always shone on her forehead, at which people wondered, and called her Evening-star. When she was ten years old, she saw her mother hanging

out twelve shirts, and asked her to whom they belonged, whereupon her mother told her all the story and showed her the coffins. So the little princess went into the forest to search for her brothers, and at last found them in the cottage. She lived happily with them for a time; but one unlucky day, Evening-star found twelve marigolds in the garden, and gave one to each of her brothers, when, presto, the cottage vanished and her brothers turned to crows, and flew away into the forest.

Then an old woman came by and told Evening-star that in order to free her brother she must neither laugh nor speak for seven years. So the poor child, out of love for her brothers, went up a tree and there spun garments in silence. After five years had thus passed, a handsome young prince rode by. He was enraptured with her beauty, and asked her to marry him. She nodded her head, for she loved him, yet she would not speak, for the seven years were not complete. The prince took her to his father's palace, where the marriage took place. Two years passed, yet Evening-star spoke no word. Then the prince's mother said that Evening-star must be wicked because she neither spoke nor laughed, and his father decreed that she must be burnt. So they tied her to a stake in the court-yard and put faggots round her, while the prince stood at a window weeping bitterly. But when they set fire to the faggots, a flapping of wings was heard, and twelve crows flew down and changed into her brothers, who put out the fire and released her. She then told the prince the reason of her silence, and they were all very happy.

This old story, some version of which you have frequently read, hides a great truth, nothing less than the great scheme of involution and evolution. The king, queen, twelve brothers and Evening-star represent the four planes, worlds, or Yugas. [The Spiritual, the Manasic, the Astral, the Material—Ed.] The Greeks named these ages or worlds after the deities Uranos, Chronos or Saturn, Zeus or Jupiter, and Athena or Minerva. The Kabalists, a very learned and mysterious class of Hebrew students, gave them the names of Aziluth, Briah, Yezirah, Aziath. The Jews called them after Abraham, Isaac, Jacob's twelve sons, and Dinah. Every world and every soul must pass through these four worlds. In the story of the twelve brothers, the king represents the

Spiritual Age before Time had begun. The queen is the second age when the feminine or substantial principle unites with Spirit, and Form and Time begin. The twelve sons represent the third age. They are the Astral giants of whom we hear so much in fairy lore.

In this story, the king prepares twelve coffins in which to bury his sons when the daughter appears. This daughter is the material age. She is our world, our personality. The coffins are the ideals or moulds of matter into which the Astral conditions were to be bound. Iron is a type of matter. These coffins have the same meaning as the "Band of Orion," and that wonderful coffin, sometimes called the coffin of Osiris, sometimes the coffin of Mahomet, and which hangs suspended between heaven and earth; that is, between spirit and matter.

But the queen who represents the Eternal Mother (called in old Egypt Neith) loves all her children. She will not have them entombed; she allows them to escape to the forest. They enter into a material condition, but they are free, not bound. Perhaps we, like Evening-star, would not have had quite so many troubles if they had been bound in the iron coffins. However, Evening-star, the personal soul (Sanskrit legends calls her Draupadi) finds the Astral giants and is happy with them for a time, until personality finds marigolds in the garden. She smells them, finds the odor pleasant and gives to her brothers. They turn into crows; that is, they become black, hateful, cawing things, ever flying into darkness. Does not this incident make one think of Eve and the apple, and the loss of Paradise?

But the ever-present fairy god-mother tells Evening-star how to remedy the evil. She must forego pleasures and enter into Silence; that means she must find the world of spirit and cross its boundary.

Evening-star obeys. For five long years she sits in the tree (the cosmic tree) and spins, spins ever in silence. She is sustained by the thought that only by thus suffering and working can she free her brothers—those Astral giants now turned into crows. The five years represent the five lower, or human, principles. When she reaches the sixth, Buddhi-Hermes, the fairy prince comes along and takes her as his bride to his father's palace, the seventh principle, Atma. However, she is not yet free. She is condemned to be burned. Yes, all who aspire to the higher life, all those who *will* to be heroes, heroines, saints or

adepts, must be burned—melted, like gold, in the furnace of suffering, that all the naughtiness of self, all the dross of matter, may be purified. But Evening-star was not killed. Her obedience during the seven years of trial had made her free. Fire could not burn her, for over the spirit fire has no power and she is freed by the help of those Astral Brothers whom she had freed from enchantment. Again they are united in the Father's House, and are happy forever.

E. WEBSTER.

### AIDS.

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN AUGUST NUMBER.

No. 1.—The lotus is the emblem of the productive power of nature through the agency of fire and water. The seeds of the lotus contain, even before they germinate perfectly formed leaves, the miniature shapes of what one day, as perfected plants, they will become. Hence, it pictures all the power, all the perfections latent in man. In the Upanishads the lotus signifies nerve centers.

2.—Most certainly a Chinaman is a brother. First, because being a man he forms part of the great human man, to which every one of us belong. As the cells in our physical body, so are individuals to humanity. Secondly, because his Higher Self as well as the Higher Self of each one of us is a ray of the one sun, Atma. Universal Brotherhood makes no distinction of race or color.

3.—Our bodies and physical brain go into pralaya every night when we go to sleep. The trees go into pralaya when they lose their leaves. It is a period of rest on some plane. It is a getting ready for more work. Some day the sun will go to sleep; then pralaya will come to the planet.

4.—If you stand before the glass and watch your face when it expresses anger, or discontent, or fear, or any ugliness, you will notice that angular lines and wrinkles and darkness come out that spoil the beauty of mouth, eyes, forehead, even the nose is affected. Now, if this ugly thought becomes a habit some of those lines will come into the face, and it grows ugly. Whereas, happy, noble, loving thoughts light up the face, smooth out the wrinkles, curve the lines into roundness. A persistent thinking of beautiful, happy thoughts will make one beautiful. Try it.

5, 6.—According to Theosophic teachings, souls are of three classes: Animal, human, divine. Hence animals have souls. And they think. Some of the higher animals that become companions of man think and reason.

#### NEW QUESTIONS.

- No. 7.—What is the Linga Sharira? 8.—What is Kama Loka?  
9.—How far can the Linga Sharira go from the physical body?  
10.—What is Selflessness?